census UPDATE

www.abs.gov.au/census

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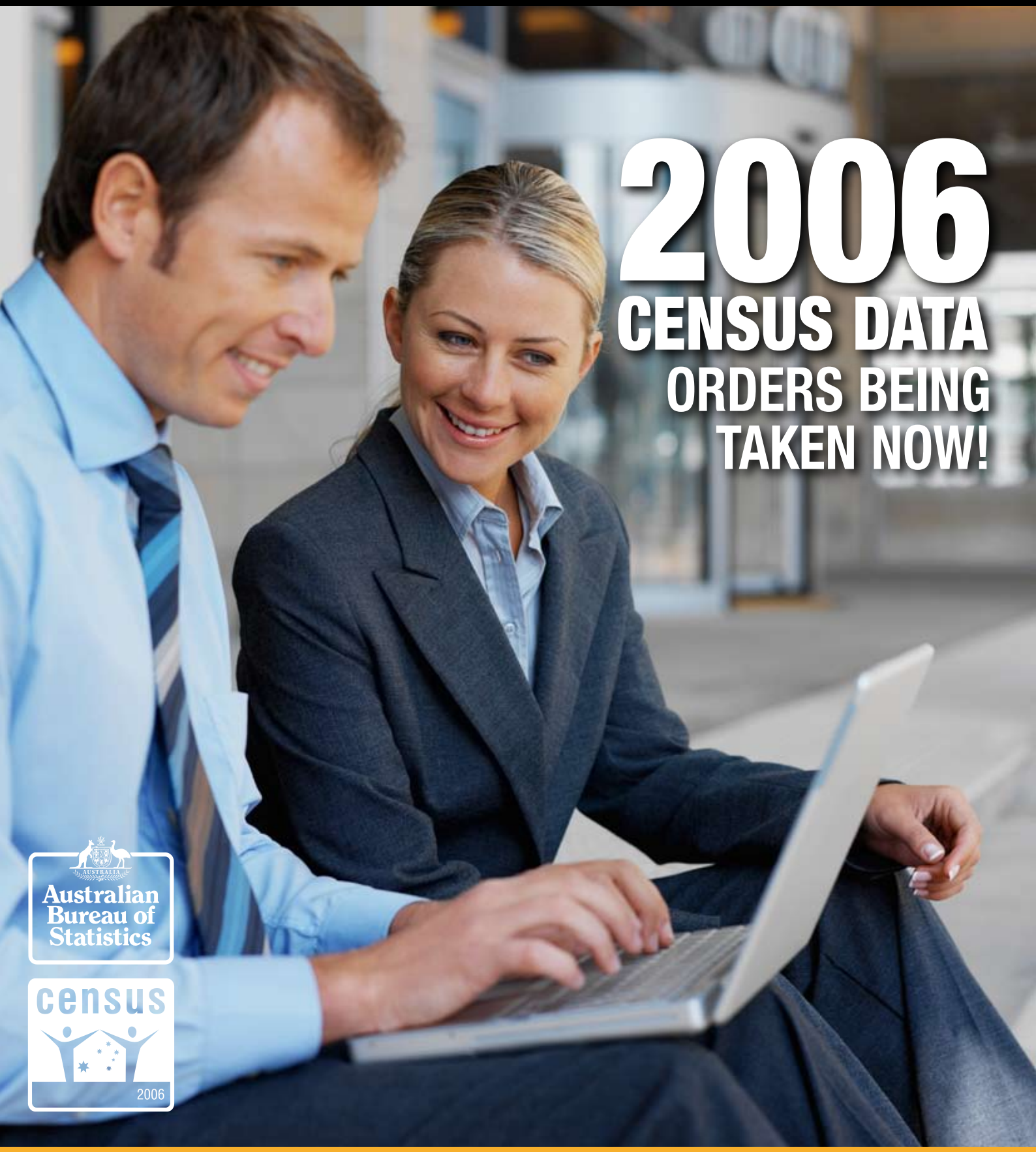

2006 CENSUS DATA ORDERS BEING TAKEN NOW!

Australian Bureau of Statistics

census 2006

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census UPDATE

Census Update is a regular free newsletter from Corporate Communications at the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

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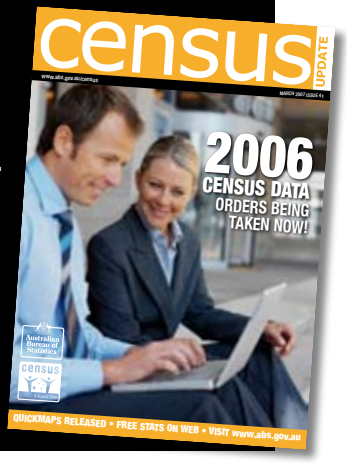


2006 CENSUS CUSTOMISED TABLES: ADVANCE ORDER SERVICE

The countdown to the release of the 2006 Census data has begun with the news that the Advance Order Service (AOS) is now available.

The ABS is once again offering it's AOS to help you prepare for your receipt and use of 2006 Census information. This service proved popular for the 2001 Census.

Demand for customised tables is high in the months following the release of Census data. First release is scheduled for June/ July 2007, second release expected October 2007. Using the AOS reduces waiting time by enabling you to specify your table requirements prior to the data release.

This service is perfect for those requiring large and/or complex tables. The service will ensure your customised tables are delivered to you as soon as possible after the official release of the data. Clients taking advantage of this service will have their orders processed on a 'first in, first served' basis.

ABS information consultants are available to guide you through the process and provide advice on data issues and pricing of Census tables.

With only a few months until this information becomes available to you we look forward to launching the first release of Census data in mid 2007. Staff at the ABS' Data Processing Centre in Melbourne are currently processing responses from the Census in preparation for this event.

For more information on how to take advantage of the Advance Order Service phone 1300 135 070. An online brochure is also available on the ABS website. Visit www.abs.gov.au and click on the Advance Order icon.

Please note that the content of the data released will not be certain until a few weeks before the scheduled release date. Whilst we endeavour to meet your data requirements, this may have implications for the range or quality of variables you specify in your tables. Information Consultants will work closely with you to keep you informed of issues that may affect your information needs, and offer alternatives if available.

In an otherwise unremarkable office building in the heart of the Melbourne CBD, over 800 people are currently hard at work producing the best quality Census data ever.

At the DATA PROCESSING CENTRE it's full steam ahead

The Data Processing Centre, or DPC, has been humming with activity since August 2006, when the first trickle of Census forms returned by the public quickly became a flood. It was all hands on deck to check the initial rush of forms. Even senior management rolled up their sleeves to assist with the 'Precapture' process.

The DPC is housed in what was formerly the headquarters of a major bank, and we've found the massive bank vaults in the basement ideal for the secure storage of Census forms. With over 10 million forms, keeping track of their movement from storage to processing and back again is a challenge. To assist in this stage of the processing, a barcode scanning system was installed to control the flow of forms between the many different areas of the building.

In preparation for the scanning stage the forms needed to be sliced and diced. As the Census forms are made up of 18 bound and stapled pages, each form has to be guillotined into single sheets and then sent to the scanning floor for the next stage in the processing.

Scanning

Working split shifts, the scanning operators have processed the 10 million forms and well over 100 million individual sheets in just a few short months. The scanning machines can read both sides of a page at once and instantly create images. These images can be cut down into individual questions or image 'snippets', eliminating the further need to physically move the forms around the building. Once scanned, the forms are sent back to storage and are unlikely to be touched again until the end of processing when they are pulped and recycled under strict ABS supervision.

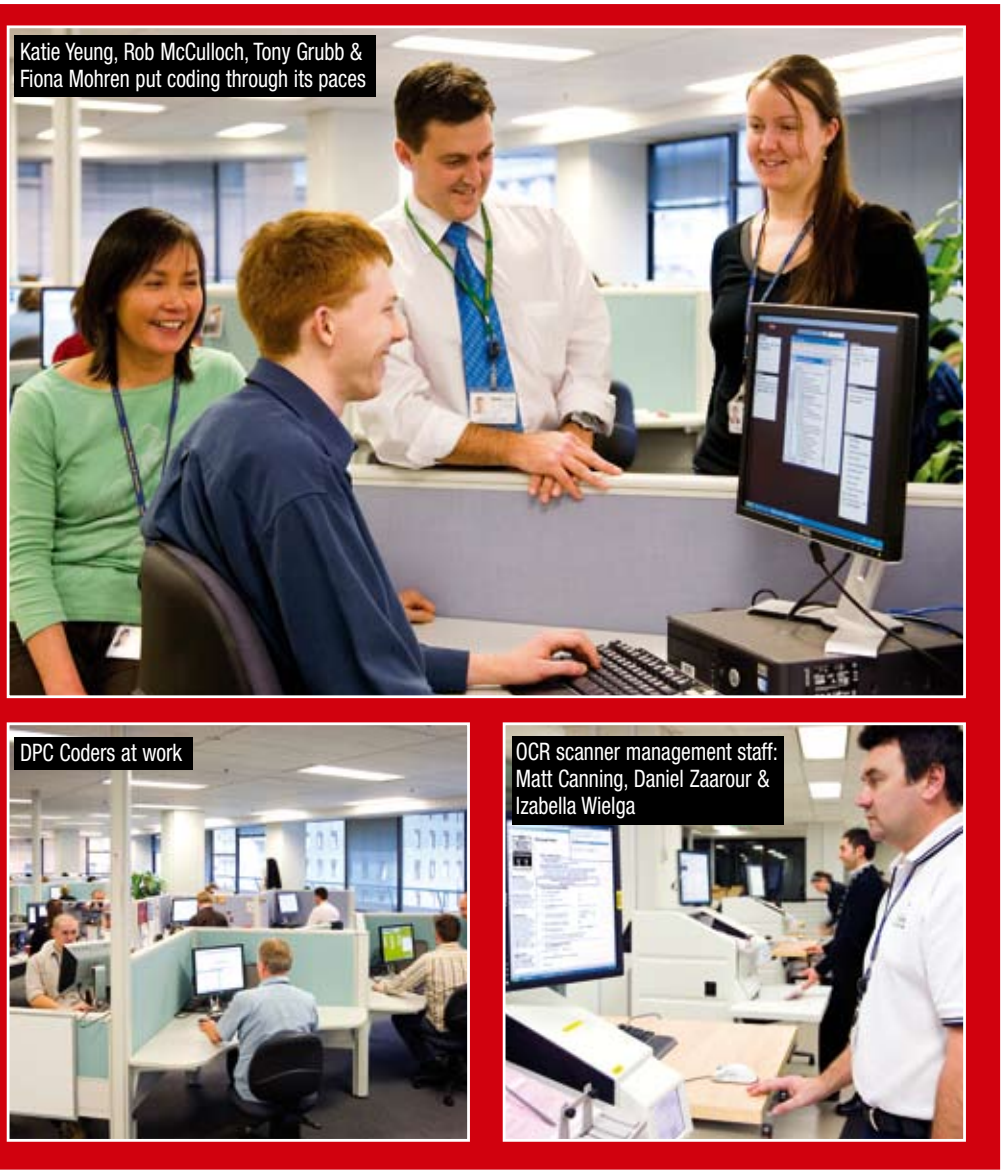
The responses on the forms are captured using an Optical Mark Recognition system which detects the marks the person has made when answering specific tick box questions. Questions requiring hand written text have the responses recognised and processed using Intelligent Character Recognition technology. This technology can largely cope with the differences in handwriting across respondents. In the few instances where handwriting cannot be read automatically by the system, responses go through a process of 'repair', where operators make manual corrections.

eCensus

If a respondent chose to use the eCensus and filled in their form online, precapture, guillotining, scanning and text recognition were not needed. This has generated major savings in both time and money. As more people choose the eCensus option in future Censuses the results could potentially be released earlier.

Coding

While scanning and recognition is taking place other staff are hard at work ensuring that there are no inconsistencies between the dwellings and persons counted. For example, if there were four people in a household, two filled in a household form, one asked for a separate personal form for privacy reasons and the other used the eCensus, the information must be drawn together into one dwelling record. This process ensures people are only counted once and attributed to the same dwelling.



Katie Yeung, Rob McCulloch, Tony Grubb & Fiona Mohren put coding through its paces

DPC Coders at work

OCR scanner management staff: Matt Canning, Daniel Zaarour & Izabella Wielga

The majority of staff at the DPC work as coders. Responses to the questions on the Census are 'coded' to a particular category within a classification, or a framework that allows the grouping of similar responses. For example, responses to the question on country of birth of 'New Guinea, 'PNG' and 'Papua Niugini' would all be coded to the category for Papua New Guinea.

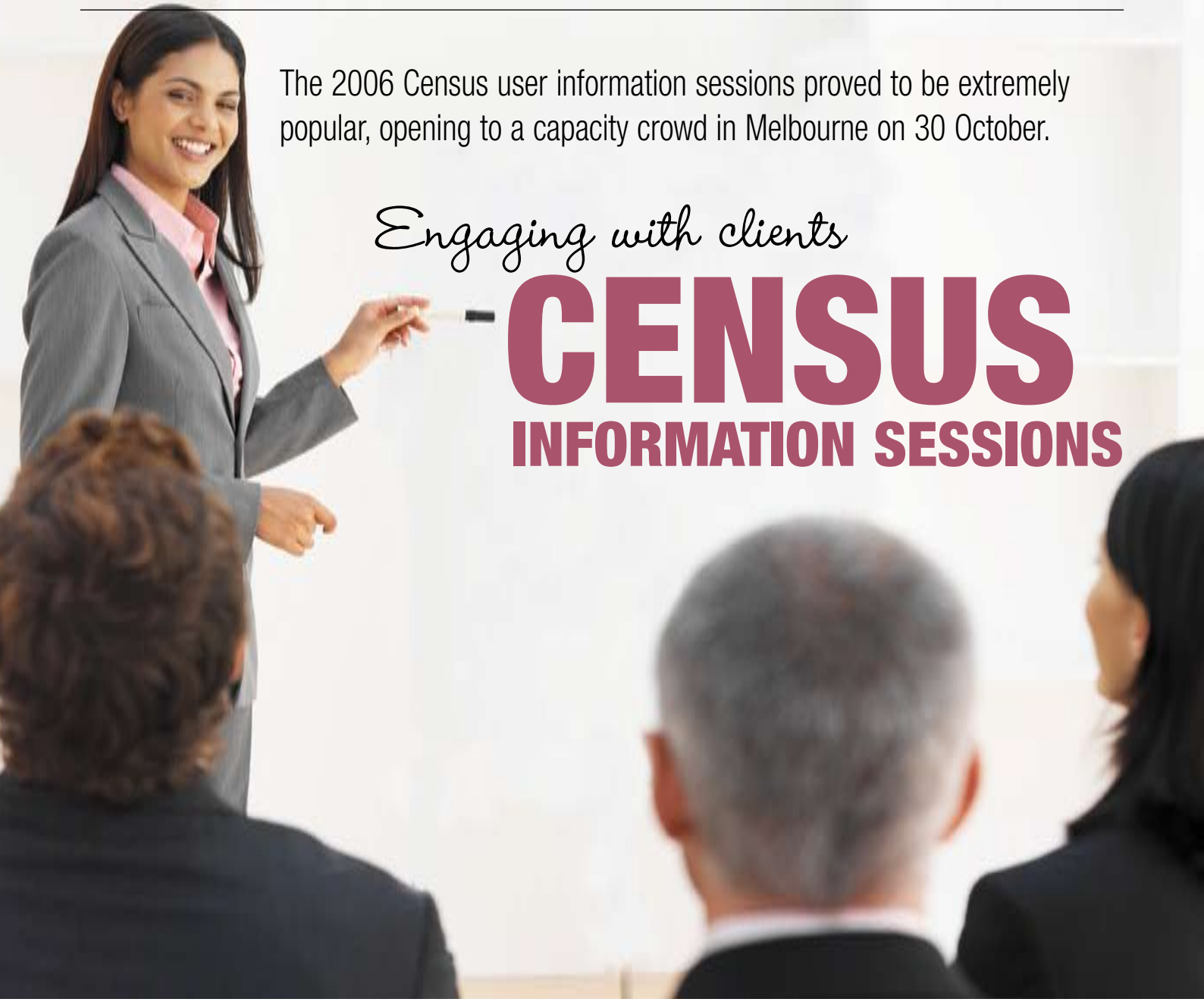
Up to 90% of responses are coded automatically while the remaining 10% are sent to an operator to resolve.

Coding of basic demographic variables - sex, age, marital status and religion as well as address (both where you usually live and where you were on Census night) is virtually complete, with staff keeping a close eye on the quality of data. Coding of the more complex questions, such as occupation, industry and educational qualifications is currently underway, along with the coding of address data to a new micro-level of geography, Mesh Blocks.

Time Capsule Project

For those people who answered "yes" to the Census Time Capsule option, their name identified information on the Census form is now being microfilmed and will be kept securely for 99 years by the National Archives of Australia. This will be a huge bonus to historians and genealogists alike. As an extra security measure, special temporary dark rooms will be built at the DPC to process the microfilms. This eliminates additional steps in the chain of custody.

To keep an 800 strong temporary workforce happy, healthy and productive requires support. This includes recruitment, occupational health and safety, staff support, payroll, general administration and the huge effort of IT staff to keep 800 computers running. With only a few short months to go before release you can be assured that the staff at the DPC are busy getting the data ready so that it can be released into the community.



The 2006 Census user information sessions proved to be extremely popular, opening to a capacity crowd in Melbourne on 30 October.

Engaging with clients

CENSUS INFORMATION SESSIONS

Almost 200 clients from all levels of government, as well as academia and private research firms filled Melbourne's Treasury Theatre to learn about the range of new web-based products being developed by the ABS.

Two surveys and a series of face-to-face sessions have been conducted annually in every state and territory across Australia since the 2001 Census. This information has guided the development of the 2006 Census product range, ensuring they will be relevant and reflective of the needs of users.

A similar sized group attended the opening day's afternoon session. The sessions have toured the country, travelling to all state and territory capitals as well as Launceston, Newcastle and Townsville. The final session was held in Perth on 30 November.

The sessions provided clients with the opportunity to preview the 2006 suite of Census products and services and ask questions. Clients were particularly interested to learn more about our overall product suite for the 2006 Census available for free via the ABS website and specific products such as CDATA Online and Table Builder, the availability of mesh blocks and the other levels of geography.

Census FAQ's

The answers to the frequently asked questions raised at the information sessions are currently being compiled and will be available on the ABS website shortly. For a sample of some frequently asked questions please refer to the following page.

User consultation

Corporate Communications Assistant Director Kris Leggo said the ABS has had an overwhelming response to the sessions with well over 2,000 clients participating around Australia. "The feedback from clients to the planned data product releases has been very positive and enthusiastic," she said.

One client exclaimed 'fantastic' in response to Director of Census Products & Services Michael Beahan's description of the products now free on the web and the capability and flexibility of the planned Census products.

This sums up the perception and anticipation of the directions for web-based data dissemination. The move from charged to free products on the web also allows access to Census data to a greater number of people in the community than ever before.

"The products and services containing 2006 Census data are also being developed to suit both the experienced data users as well as the novice," Kris said.

Intermediaries

For the 2006 Census, intermediaries have an increased role in delivering Census data to clients, especially products with full GIS capabilities. These registered distributors of ABS data were also on hand at most sessions to inform clients about how they plan to use 2006 Census data in their products and services. Having these organisations present at the sessions meant clients were able to obtain a complete picture of the Census which not only includes the data disseminated by the ABS but the value added products that intermediaries are able to provide.

A full list of registered distributors of ABS Census data is available on the ABS website. View this information by clicking on the 'Services We Provide' link on the ABS website.

Sessions continue

Further sessions are being conducted by the ABS' State Offices in regional centres in early 2007. While there will be a particular focus on 2006 Census output there will also be information about other services that the ABS provides which would be relevant to regionally-based individuals, schools and organisations. To find out more about the Regional sessions click on the 'Census Reference and Information' link on the Census home page.

Thank you

The ABS would like to thank all those who attended for making the sessions a success. We look forward to presenting you with the 2006 Census data in a few months time.

Keep informed

Bookmark **www.abs.gov.au/census** and follow the Census link to check out our new Census developments as they happen. Email **census.users@abs.gov.au** and type 'add to Census email' in the subject line to subscribe to our Census email newsletter. You can opt out at any time. Further information about our 2006 product range is also provided on page 8.

Some Frequently Asked Questions...

What is Table Builder?

Table Builder is a product that, for the first time in ABS history, gives users remote access to the complete Census unit record file. Table Builder is designed for experienced users of Census data. Users of Table Builder can extract and manipulate an unlimited number of Census tables without the need to make costly consultancy data requests. Table Builder allows users to create tables, graphs and thematic maps of Census data.

How much will CDATA Online cost?

CDATA Online will be free.

How will users access SEIFA?

The 2006 SEIFA scores will be available at no charge from the ABS website. A detailed publication containing the methodology and how SEIFA scores can be used for research purposes will also be released in March 2008. The ABS is currently exploring internet-based analysis tools that will allow clients to undertake distribution analyses and compare relative disadvantage levels across states and Local Government Areas (LGA).

Have the digital boundaries been finalised?

The first release of the 2006 digital boundaries was released in July 2006, the second release is expected in July 2007 and the third release of the 2006 digital boundaries are expected to be in October 2007.

The ABS has already received a very positive response to the release of 2001 Census data in the new 2006 format. Census users have embraced this opportunity to familiarise themselves with the simplified web interface before the 2006 data is available.

NEW 2006 CENSUS WEB PRODUCTS

These products are only part of the comprehensive range of publications and electronic products that will available from the 2006 Census. With this in mind let's take a closer look at some of the new offerings from the 2006 Census product suite.

QuickMaps with 2001 data: **Available Now!**

QuickMaps are designed to provide users with quick and easy access to thematically mapped Census statistics using 2001 Census data. The maps are available for larger geographies and depict selected population, ethnicity, education, family, income, labour force and dwelling characteristics. This is the first time the ABS has released interactive thematic data on its website.

Users now have the opportunity to select a Census topic, a large geographical area to map, and the level of geographic disaggregation that best suits their needs wherever possible.

The maps contain identifiers to assist clients in recognising their selected areas. Identifiers include main roads, rivers, airports and selected area labels. A scale bar is included on each map for reference.

This is a **FREE** product and is available **Now**.

CDATA Online

CDATA Online, jointly developed by the ABS and Space Time Research, combines comprehensive information on Australian society from the 2006 Census, with powerful web mapping application software. The CDATA Online product is aimed at clients more familiar with the intricacies of variables, topics and geography that form the basis of Census data.

CDATA Online provides instant access to valuable data topics such as - age, education, housing, income, transport, religion, ethnicity, occupation and more, from a single Collection District to an entire State/Territory or all of Australia.

The product is designed to provide clients with a high degree of freedom in selecting and combining the geographical areas most suited to their needs. Accordingly, all Census geographies will be available to clients. A sophisticated mapping tool will be available to allow clients to identify and select geographical areas of interest. The clients selected Census data can be viewed on screen in a table, a graph, as a map, or downloaded free of charge in a variety of formats. Registered users of CDATA Online can save their custom geographies, data items and tables for future access.

The CDATA Online product will replace selected Census products which were available in 2001, such as CLIB, CDATA Quickbuild & Census for Schools.

This is a FREE product and will be available at a later stage.

SEIFA - (Socio-Economic Indexes For Areas)

As with SEIFA 2001 this is a product developed especially for those interested in the assessment of the welfare of Australian communities. SEIFA summarises information from the Census into four separate indexes that each concentrate on a different aspect of the social and economic conditions in an area, providing a method of determining the level of social and economic well-being in that region.

These indexes show where the affluent (as opposed to just high income earning) live, where the disadvantaged (as opposed to the unemployed) live and where the highly skilled and educated (as opposed to the tertiary educated people) live. SEIFA 2006 will provide information and rankings for a wide range of geographic areas.

The planned release date for SEIFA indexes for the 2006 Census is March 2008.

For an example of how SEIFA data is used please go to page 11 in this issue for a case study.

Table Builder

The most sophisticated of the 2006 Census products, Table Builder is aimed at advanced users who are familiar with Census concepts and definitions.

Table Builder is a product that allows users to construct their own tables via an interactive web interface. Users will be able to export the tables produced in Table Builder; download boundaries and data in a GIS format; and export the thematic maps & graphs created in the product.

The pricing for Table Builder will be $1,320 per subscription. If both 2001 and 2006 data are ordered then the price will be $1,550. The release date is yet to be determined.

For more information about these products and the entire 2006 Census product suite simply click on the Census Products link on the Census home page www.abs.gov.au/census.

Did you know

In the past 80 years over 500,000 surf life saving rescues have been made and not one life lost between the flags. Approx 8,000 - 10,000 rescues made each summer!

WHAT'S NEW WITH THE WEB

With a range of new and exciting online Census products currently available using 2001 data, and soon to be released with 2006 data, let's look at the latest developments on the ABS website.

2006 Community Profile Templates - out now!

The 2006 Census Community Profile Series templates, released on the ABS website on 5 January 2007, are provided as a guide to the standard tables which will be available when the data is released. Templates for the Basic Community, Indigenous and Place of Enumeration Profiles are currently available.

Take advantage of this early release of the templates in preparation for the release of 2006 Census data from mid-2007. Determine in advance which data will be available as standard output and plan your requirements from customised tables accordingly. Please note that release dates vary for different Community Profile types.

Finding Census Data Has Never Been Easier...

If you haven't experienced the new Census Internet interface yet, here's another good reason to visit today.

QuickStats provides a summary of key Census data for a chosen area, benchmarked against Australia.

We now have a new and quicker way to get a QuickStats picture of an area.

QuickStats QuickSearch enables you to view a variety of Census information for any postal area in Australia.

It's as simple as typing in the postcode on the Census homepage at www.abs.gov.au and pressing 'GO'

QuickStats Quick Search

For 2001 Census QuickStats, enter your Postcode into the box below.

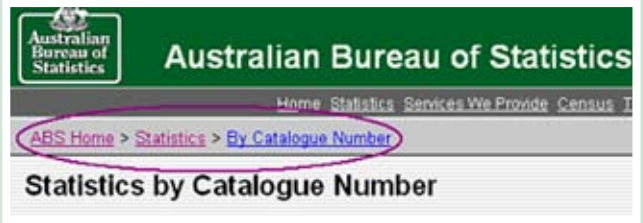
(Postcode (e.g. 2913)

Go

In addition, Print Friendly options and Breadcrumbs are due to be added to the ABS website in March/April this year.

The new Print Friendly feature will enhance printing functionality for all statistical products. By clicking the 'Print Friendly' link at the top right of the content on Summary and Explanatory Notes tabs, users will be presented with a display of the current content without web navigation links.

Breadcrumbs will also be introduced to the ABS website. This new feature will make navigating the ABS website easier, as it displays the hierarchy of pages from the home page to your current screen, and allows you to return to any point along the 'path' by simply clicking on the link.


Australian Bureau of Statistics
Home Statistics Services We Provide Census
ABS Home > Statistics > By Catalogue Number
Statistics by Catalogue Number

These developments reflect the ABS' ongoing commitment to improving website access and usability. Drawing on your feedback and continued research into the latest website functionality initiatives, the ABS will identify improvements and work to implement them on our site.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics is playing an important part in a new training initiative created by Surf Life Saving Australia. By Sean O'Connell

Since 1910 when the then Surf Bathing Association of NSW (SBANSW) awarded its first eight Bronze Medallions to surf lifesavers from Coogee and Bondi clubs, the organisation has provided high-level education and training for its members.

In 2006, Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA – as SBANSW is now known) issued more than 60,000 awards, ranging from the Bronze Medallion to Rescue Helicopter Crew Certificates.

In May 2006, the Australian Government announced a $10 million grant to SLSA for the creation of an Australian Lifesaving Academy (ALA). The objective of the funding is to align SLSA awards to related qualifications within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) System.

The ALA is a major project that will manage the development and promotion of the resources required to deliver these qualifications. In addition, the ALA is set to become financially self-sufficient when the funding allocation expires in 2009-10, requiring the ALA to promote its range of training products within the highly competitive commercial market.

According to Chris Davis, National Academy Manager, the use of credible statistics on demographics, education and training, is one of the keys to the future success of the Academy.

SLSA uses Census population data which record population shifts to coastal areas, to provide the optimum level of surf lifesaving services as part of their ongoing campaign to reduce coastal drowning deaths.

For the public, the success of the Australian Lifesaving Academy will be felt through better trained surf lifesavers and ultimately safer beaches.

No Child Left Excluded

The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling at the University of Canberra (NATSEM) is a major user of Census data for research and analysis. By Rob Tanton

NATSEM found the availability of Census data was crucial to a recent research project, which contributes to a better understanding of disadvantage in Australia at a small area level. For this project the Census is the only data source that can provide reliable estimates of a number of socio-economic variables at a small area level for the whole of Australia.

The project identifies regions where children may be at risk of social exclusion. In this project children at high risk of social exclusion are those identified as living in families with multiple sources of disadvantage, such as low parental income; low levels of family education and low levels of family labour force participation. The index is calculated using the same method as the ABS SEIFA indexes, with the same data source - the 2001 Census. There are three indexes calculated: one for children aged 0–4 years, one for children aged 5–15 years and one for children aged 0–15 years. NATSEM has calculated each index for most SLAs in Australia. This research is funded through an ARC Discovery Grant. ABS was able to assist NATSEM by providing a number of tailored Census output tables which addressed their particular data requirements.

The Child Social Exclusion (CSE) Indices shed new light on the spatial distribution of disadvantage in Australia, as in many disadvantaged families, the number of children outnumber the number of adults. This is particularly true in single parent families.

More information about this and other research work conducted by NATSEM using Census data is available at www.natsem.canberra.edu.au or by contacting Rob Tanton on 02 6201 2769.

Sun, sand, surf,

Around 100 invited guests enjoyed the magnificent views of Sydney's famous Bondi Beach as the 2007 Year Book Australia was launched at the North Bondi Surf Lifesaving Club.

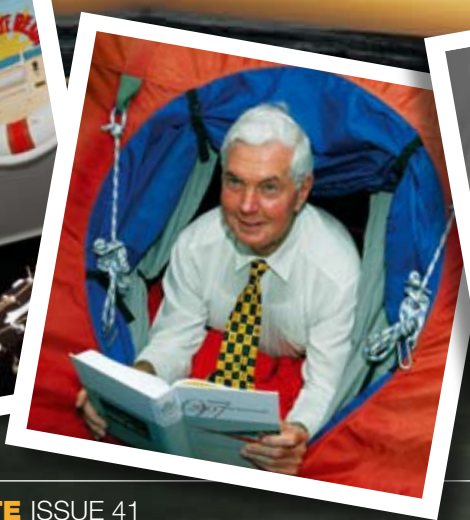
Each edition of the Year Book explores key themes relevant to the Australian community. The latest edition has joint themes of surf lifesaving and the history of Australians in the Antarctic.

These themes mark the Year of the Surf Lifesaver which recognises the centenary of surf lifesaving in Australia (2007) and the International Polar Year (2007-08).

The Year Book was unveiled to the public on January 24 by the Governor-General of Australia, Major General Michael Jeffery. The Governor-General is also Chief Patron for the Year of the Surf Lifesaver.

In launching the Year Book, the Governor-General spoke of his involvement in the 2006 Census and congratulated the ABS on the Year Book.

"In August I was privileged to visit the ABS headquarters in Canberra as a prelude to this year's Census of Population and Housing. What a massive operation. And what a tribute to the Bureau that it was carried out with such thoroughness and efficiency," said the Governor-General.



ice and YEAR BOOKS

"We are fortunate in Australia to have an organisation as professional as the ABS in furnishing both our decision makers and the wider enquiring public with relevant, accurate data," he said.

"So well done to the ABS and all involved in the completion of such a comprehensive and important publication."

With assistance from the lead surf lifesaver Michael "MJ" Bates the Governor-General unveiled the Year Book.

In a tribute to the Year Book's contrasting topics, a copy was on display encased in an ice sculpture of a crashing wave.

In addition to the special themed chapters, the Year Book also contains a wide range of ABS and non-ABS information on the Australian community, economy and environment.

All content of the 2007 Year Book Australia is available free of charge from the ABS website www.abs.gov.au. Hard copies of the Year Book can be purchased for $97 each, including postage and handling. Call 1300 135 070 or visit the ABS website for further information.

Main Image by John Veage/Harvie Allison Photography, provided by Surf Life Saving Queensland

Images below: Scenes from the 2007 Year Book Australia launch held at the North Bondi Surf Lifesaving Club 24 January 2007

NSW TAFE Library wins ABS award for promoting Census statistics

TAFE NSW - Riverina Institute Library Services has won the LEP Excellence Award for increasing awareness and use of Australian Bureau of Statistics resources.

Following a professional development workshop presented by NSW LEP Coordinator Anne Freer, Riverina staff were inspired to promote the many uses of statistical data to their staff and students.

The Riverina Institute impressed the judges with their initiative to provide intranet Quicklinks to ABS regional Census data. General Education teachers and Albury campus librarian Noelene Williams also developed a training program for ESL students, designed to help them feel comfortable with the Census form and to demonstrate what the information was used for.

Jennifer Vaughan, Manager of Library & Information Services, was delighted when Michael Janssen-Gibson from the ABS called her with the good news. “I am particularly excited about winning the award. It validates the way we operate. We have broad horizons and are always about providing equity of access to information. We may be small, but we are professional, and I am lucky to work with very clever people who share a pioneer spirit”.

All elements of the community — businesses, individuals and a myriad of groups — increasingly depend on reliable information to make sound decisions. The ABS is one of the most important providers of such information.

The ABS appreciates the guiding role librarians play in helping their communities to find and use reliable information. Librarians make the commitment to understand ABS information so that they can provide the best possible service to their clients. Many put in a lot of effort to raise awareness, understanding and use of ABS information in their communities.

Ian Ewing, the ABS NSW Regional Director presenting the LEP Excellence Award to Jennifer Vaughan, Manager Library & Information Services, TAFE NSW Riverina Institute.

The ABS is delighted to recognise and reward the efforts of the Riverina Institute. ABS NSW Regional Director Ian Ewing presented Jennifer Vaughan with their prize — a trophy and $1,500 worth of ABS products and services of their choice at the 20:20 Vision TAFE NSW Library Conference on 2nd February 2007 at Darling Harbour.

Did you know

Our population was estimated at just over 20.3 million. The US Census Bureau’s international database ranked Australia as 52nd country in size for 2005.

OUT NOW

QuickMaps

QuickMaps as the name suggests gives you quick and easy access to thematically mapped 2001 Census statistics via the ABS website.

Online and for FREE!

Combining 2001 Census statistics with mapping capabilities, QuickMaps give you the tools to create your own thematic maps of areas of interest free on-line, through an easy to use web interface. Whether your interests lie in ethnicity, education, family, income, labour force or dwelling characteristics, QuickMaps allows you to create mapped Census data for a geographic region of your choice. Not only will you be able to print your maps but you will have the option of exporting your own customised maps in Adobe Acrobat (.PDF files) or Portable Network Graphics (.PNG files).

MAP YOUR OWN COMMUNITY Go on-line now and create a map of your local area to get a feel for the make-up of your community. Go To www.abs.gov.au and click on the QuickMaps icon.

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ACT 2601

Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616

FOR MORE INFORMATION

WEB

Visit **www.abs.gov.au** and follow the Census link to check out new and future Census developments as they happen.

ABS STATISTICS ARE FREE ONLINE

EMAIL

Keep up to date with the latest Census news and information by emailing **census.users@abs.gov.au** and typing 'add to Census email' in the subject field. You can opt out at any time.

PHONE

Call the National Information and Referral Service on **1300 135 070**.

census.users@abs.gov.au

With the first release of 2006 Census data only months away keep informed of the latest Census events and releases through **census.users@abs.gov.au.**

This free email notification service is the best way to keep up to date with the latest Census developments as they happen. Links inside the emails will direct you to relevant parts of the ABS website for information on current issues and Census data.

HOW TO JOIN

Simply send an email to **census.users@abs.gov.au** and type **'add to Census email'** in the subject field. Your details will automatically be loaded to the alert system.

If at any time you wish to stop receiving these information updates, send an email to the above address and type 'remove from Census email' in the subject field.

Take advantage of this fast information service and receive the latest Census news, including Census Update, direct to your desk top.

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